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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AID-01	AMAD-01	A-01	CA-02	CCO-00
	CIAE-00	SJK-01	CTME-00	C-01	DEAE-00	DODE-00	DS-00
	EB-01	FBO-01	HA-09	H-01	IMMC-01	INM-01	INRE-00
	INR-01	IO-19	LAB-04	L-03	ADS-00	M-01	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OCS-06	OIC-02	OIG-01	OMB-01	OPR-01	PA-01
	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10	SCT-03	SIL-01	SNP-01
	SP-01	SR-01	SSC-01	SSO-00	SS-01	STR-20	TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8481
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 01847

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, MARR, PINR, PHUM, ASEC, PGOV, SNAR, VE
SUBJECT: PART 11: AFTER THE COUP ATTEMPT - FEBRUARY 19

REF(S): CARACAS 01785 AND PREVIOUS

1. (C) - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. POLITICAL PARTIES OPPOSE CAP'S ATTENDING DRUG SUMMIT

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WITH REFERENCE TO THE SAN ANTONIO SUMMIT, HUMBERTO
CELLI, PRESIDENT OF ACCION DEMOCRATICA, SAID AFTER
EMERGING FROM A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ ON THE
EVENING OF FEBRUARY 18 THAT "WE IN AD BELIEVE THE
PRESIDENT SHOULD STAY IN THE COUNTRY AND TRAVEL
LATER...IT IS THE SAME CRITERION THAT THE PRESIDENT
HAS." MEANWHILE, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE COMMISSION
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, JOSE RODRIGUEZ ITURBE (COPEI), SAID
THE SENATE MUST "CONSIDER WITH PRUDENCE" THE
AUTHORIZATION FOR PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ TO
ATTEND THE UPCOMING SAN ANTONIO DRUG SUMMIT SCHEDULED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED
DATE/CASE ID: 19 OCT 2006 200503206

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FOR FEBRUARY 26-27. RODRIQUEZ SAID "MY PERSONAL OPINION IS THAT HE (CAP) SHOULD NOT TRAVEL. THE PRESIDENT KNOWS THAT WE ARE IN A POLITICAL CRISIS OF UNKNOWN MAGNITUDE, AND WE CANNOT EXCLUDE A MILITARY CRISIS." HE ALSO REMINDED THE PRESIDENT THAT THE POPULATION ASCRIBES A "MAGICAL MEANING" TO THE DATE OF FEBRUARY 27, THE DAY OF RIOTS IN 1989. AND, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS SOCIALISM PARTY (MAS), FREDDY MUNOZ, CONSIDERED THE PRESIDENT'S UPCOMING TRIP AS "ABSOLUTELY INCONVENIENT." (COMMENT: AT CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON FEB. 18, WE WERE ASSURED BY THE VENEZUELAN SUMMIT COORDINATOR THAT CAP WOULD TRAVEL TO SAN ANTONIO ON FEB. 27 -- SEE CARACAS 1792. UNDER THE VENEZUELAN CONSTITUTION, ANY FOREIGN TRAVEL BY CAP MUST BE APPROVED BY THE SENATE -- WHEN CONGRESS IS IN SESSION, AS IT IS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS WEEK -- OR BY THE DELEGATED COMMISSION -- WHEN CONGRESS IS OUT OF SESSION. THE CABINET MEETS ON THE MORNING OF FEB. 20. WE DO NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT CAP MAY BEND TO ADVICE THAT HE BE IN THE COUNTRY ON FEB. 27.)

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3. JUDGE ISSUES DETENTION ORDER FOR 33 OFFICERS

ARMY COLONEL RAMON MORENO NATERA OF THE SECOND MILITARY COURT ON FEBRUARY 18 ISSUED ARREST WARRANTS FOR 33 OFFICERS ON CHARGES OF "MILITARY REBELLION" FOR THE EVENTS OF FEBRUARY 4. (ALL ARE ALREADY IN MILITARY CUSTODY; ISSUANCE OF THE WARRANTS SERVES NOTICE THAT FORMAL CHARGES ARE BEING FILED AGAINST THEM.) TWENTY-FOUR WARRANTS WERE ISSUED ON CHARGES OF "MILITARY REBELLION" (CARRYING A SENTENCE OF 28-30 YEARS), AND NINE FOR "SUPPORTING A MILITARY REBELLION" (WITH A SENTENCE OF 26-28 YEARS). THE JUDGE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT HIS INVESTIGATIONS WILL CONTINUE, AND FURTHER ARREST WARRANTS ARE EXPECTED. JUDGE MORENO SAID THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE INVESTIGATION THAT INVOLVES THE CITIES OF CARACAS, MARACAY, MARACAIBO AND VALENCIA, AND THERE WILL BE ONLY "ONE FILE AND (THEREFORE) ONE TRIAL."

ON FEBRUARY 19, EL NACIONAL REPORTED THAT 133 OFFICERS ARE UNDER ARREST AS WELL AS 967 SOLDIERS ACCUSED OF PARTICIPATING IN THE COUP ATTEMPT. THE PAPER ALSO STATED THAT MINISTER OF DEFENSE, GENERAL FERNANDO OCHOA ANTICH, VISITED THE IMPRISONED OFFICERS IN THE SAN

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CARLOS BASE SUNDAY FEBRUARY 16, AND PROMISED THEM "ABSOLUTE IMPARTIALITY" AND "LEGAL GUARANTEES" IN THEIR DEFENSE. THE PAPER CLAIMED THE DETAINED OFFICERS SHOWED RESPECT TO THE MOD AND REFERRED TO HIM AS "OUR TEACHER."

THE ARREST WARRANTS ISSUED MUST BE CONSIDERED AND EITHER UPHELD, RESCINDED OR MODIFIED BY A WAR COUNCIL (CONSEJO CONFIDENTIAL

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DE GUERRA). IF THE WAR COUNCIL UPHOLDS THE ARRESTS, THEN IT IS UP TO THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF (I.E., THE PRESIDENT) TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO CONTINUE THE TRIAL.

4. GROWING OPPOSITION TO NOMINATION OF MORALES BELLO

EL NACIONAL, ON FEBRUARY 19, REPORTED THAT COPEI SECRETARY GENERAL EDUARDO FERNANDEZ INFORMED AD SECRETARY GENERAL ALFARO UCERO OF HIS PARTY'S OBJECTION TO THE NOMINATION OF SENATOR DAVID MORALES BELLO AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS FOR THE SESSION BEGINNING IN EARLY MARCH. THE ARTICLE SAID THAT AD'S INNER CIRCLE IMMEDIATELY MET AND DISCUSSED THE ISSUE, BUT DID NOT REPORT ANY DECISION. (COMMENT: MORALES BELLO HAS A WIDESPREAD REPUTATION FOR CORRUPTION.)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 01847

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 SUBJECT: PART 11: AFTER THE COUP ATTEMPT - FEBRUARY 19

ON FEBRUARY 18, THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR/OMBUDSMAN RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM AGAIN SAID THAT MORALES BELLO'S CANDIDACY AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS IS "IMPRUDENT" AND STATED THAT "TO NOMINATE SENATOR MORALES BELLO (WILL BE A) PROVOCATION TO THE COUNTRY." ESCOVAR WAS REFERRING TO MORALES BELLO'S STATEMENT OF "DEATH TO THE COUP LEADERS"

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 IN CONGRESS ON FEBRUARY 4. THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR ENERGETICALLY REJECTED THE STATEMENT BY AN ANONYMOUS AD OFFICIAL QUALIFYING HIS POSITION REGARDING MORALES BELLO'S NOMINATION AS "TRIVIAL." ESCOVAR COUNTERED THAT "CONSTITUTIONAL PRECEPTS CANNOT BE (CONSIDERED) TRIVIAL" -- A REFERENCE TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROHIBITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY.

5. ALLUP: THERE IS (ALSO) CORRUPTION AMONG THE MILITARY

THE HEAD OF AD'S PARLIAMENTARY FACTION, HENRY RAMOS ALLUP, SAID ON FEBRUARY 18 THAT THE COUP ATTEMPT OF FEBRUARY 4 CANNOT BE ATTRIBUTED SOLELY TO AN ATTEMPT TO ERADICATE CORRUPTION AMONG CIVILIANS. ALLUP POINTED OUT THAT "WE CANNOT FORGET THAT THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION IS NOT FOREIGN TO THE NATIONAL ARMED FORCES, (AND) CORRUPT CIVILIANS AND MILITARY MADE (IMPROPER) DEALS FOR PURCHASE OF WEAPONS."

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6. CABINET CHANGES STILL ON THE AGENDA?

ACCORDING TO A FEBRUARY 19 NEWSPAPER REPORT, ON FEBRUARY 17 AD LEADERS, INCLUDING SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS ALFARO UCERO, ASKED CAP IN AN "UNUSUALLY CATEGORICAL TONE" TO DISMISS MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ AS MINISTER OF PLANNING. AD IS UPSET WITH RODRIGUEZ' STRONG STATEMENTS AFTER THE COUP ATTEMPT ON THE NECESSITY TO CONTINUE WITH THE PRESENT ECONOMIC PACKAGE. REPORTEDLY, THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF AD ALSO REQUESTED CHANGES IN SEVERAL OTHER MINISTRIES, INCLUDING PLANNING, FINANCE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND INTERIOR.

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